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Security Council
Sixty-first year

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Letter dated 15 February 2006 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the final communiqué and the Abu Dhabi Declaration adopted by the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its twenty-sixth session, held in Abu Dhabi on 18 and 19 December 2005, under the chairmanship of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates and ruler of Abu Dhabi (see annex).

I would be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 14, 15, 24, 31, 38, 48, 52, 57, 61, 62, 94, 100, 106, 107 and 108, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mohammed **Al-Otaiba**
First Secretary
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

Annex to the letter dated 15 February 2006 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic]

The Abu Dhabi Declaration issued by the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its twenty-sixth session

With guidance from our Islamic religion, basing ourselves on the lofty purposes, principles and aims of the Charter of the Gulf Cooperation Council and on the common ties between the peoples it represents, and having regard for the important phase of political, economic, social, and cultural changes through which our Gulf Arab region is passing.

And pursuant to the statements and resolutions issued by the Supreme Council at its previous sessions, the Council, at its twenty-sixth session, held in the city of Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates on 16 and 17 Dhu'lqa'dah A H 1426, corresponding to 18 and 19 December 2005, reviewed all issues and subjects of concern to the member States of the Council and their peoples.

The Supreme Council affirms the importance of the human role in development as stated by Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan (may God rest his soul): "Man is the basic component of all progress; the dearest fruit of this land is human beings, whom we must care for deeply and whose welfare we must safeguard."

The GCC States attach special importance to the human being as the pillar of society, in keeping with their complete faith in the importance of deepening our lofty values and supporting Islamic, Arab and national unity.

The Supreme Council commends the efforts of member States to update and revise educational curricula, and stresses the importance of laying out a broad strategy for secondary, higher, professional and technical education to ensure that education is geared towards national goals and recent developments in the region.

In conjunction with the launching of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) to promote education as the basis of a more sustainable human society, the Council is aware that global challenges require that education systems undergo fundamental development in order to keep pace with the rapidly growing informational and technological challenges posed by the information revolution and in order to achieve the desired progress.

The Supreme Council is of the view that the development of national human resources in the education sector must be considered one of the key elements in moving education forward and creating an enlightened generation that stays true to its human and cultural values, traditions and heritage, while at the same time being capable of adapting to contemporary developments.

The Supreme Council encourages greater research, development, science and technology, and support for efforts to enhance and develop both public and private scientific and technological institutions, including scientific cooperation and information exchanges.

The Supreme Council calls for the implementation of strategies and development plans and for the development of scientific education, training and future planning for all individuals in society, for particular care to be devoted to women, youth, children, those with special needs, and the family, and for efforts to meet all contemporary social challenges.

The GCC States believe that their Islamic faith is a religion of moderation that attaches special importance to the role of knowledge in deepening awareness and developing society, based on the foundations of mutual respect, tolerance, moderation, and the enhancement of dialogue free from any radicalism or extremism.

Issued at Abu Dhabi
Monday, 17 Dhu'lqa dah A.H.1427, corresponding to 11 December 2006

Closing statement of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its twenty-sixth session

Abu Dhabi — the United Arab Emirates

16 and 17 Dhu'lqa'dah A.H. 1426, corresponding to 18 and 19 December 2005

"The King Fahd Summit"

In response to the gracious invitation of Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, the Supreme Council held its twenty-sixth session in the city of Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates, on Sunday 16 and Monday 17 Dhu'lqa'dah A.H. 1426, corresponding to 18 and 19 December 2005, under the Chairmanship of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates and Chairman of the current session of the Supreme Council, and with the attendance of:

His Majesty King Hamad bin Issa Al-Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain;

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, Sultan of Oman;

His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar;

His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait.

His Excellency Mr. Abdul Rahman bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) also took part in the meeting.

The Supreme Council stated that, on the anniversary of the blessed establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council 25 years ago in the city of Abu Dhabi, under the patronage of the wise and dear departed leader Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, this fair city, under the reign of an excellent successor to an excellent predecessor, His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, once again hosts this esteemed gathering with pride in the great accomplishments of this lofty edifice.

The Council expressed its genuine appreciation for and pride in the founding leaders who came before them and whose memory will live forever in the spirit and lofty goals of this great citadel. May God have mercy on them and bestow upon them the best of rewards for the benevolence, development and construction that they bestowed on their homelands, for their devotion to the security and safety of the GCC and the peoples it represents, and for their service to the just causes of the Arab and Islamic peoples and to regional and global peace. The leaders of the GCC States affirm their continued resolve to move the Council along its blessed path of joint cooperation to realize yet greater achievements in various fields in response to the hopes and aspirations of the citizens of the GCC States.

The Council expressed sadness and pain at the Arab and Islamic peoples' loss of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, the late King Fahd Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, along with appreciation for his glorious deeds and great benevolence that strengthened the Council and supported the aspirations of its peoples, and for the

role of the departed, may God have mercy upon him, in the service of Arab and Islamic causes and the family of nations.

The Supreme Council welcomed the new Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, King of Saudi Arabia, may God preserve him, who is the living embodiment of the continuation of a legacy of development, benevolence, strength and progress for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its dear people, as well as of the continued strength of GCC and the continued achievement, along with his brother leaders of the GCC States, of its lofty goals, the preservation of its security, the reaffirmation of its principles and the achievement of stability and prosperity for the peoples of the region.

The Supreme Council welcomed the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's membership in the World Trade Organization, stressing that this would be a great support to the Council and an important factor in global economic stability.

The Supreme Council applauded the outcome of the Third Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Summit, held in Mecca on 5 and 6 Dhu'lqa'dah A H 1426, and both the Mecca Declaration and the final communiqué issued at the close of the Summit, which covered all subjects relating to the well-being and progress of the Islamic member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

The Supreme Council expressed its appreciation for the efforts made by the State of Qatar under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, during his Chairmanship of the Group of 77 and China. It expressed its satisfaction with the outcome of the Second South Summit, held in Doha in June 2005.

The Council reviewed the achievements of its member States in development and modernization and in the economic, political, educational and social spheres, recalling and affirming the "Manama Declaration", issued at the "Zayed Summit" held last year in the Kingdom of Bahrain, regarding the importance of pursuing the process of comprehensive modernization to keep abreast of the times and its basic demands, while taking care to proceed gradually in reaping the fruits of such development and modernization and to let it well up from the depths of the national being and from the heritage and history of the GCC countries and their peoples.

The Supreme Council reviewed the accomplishments achieved through joint action in a number of areas since the previous session and made a comprehensive evaluation of regional and international political and security issues and events, in light of the alarming incidents and rapid developments being witnessed in the region and the world.

Noting the desire of the leaders of the GCC States to enhance and broaden their cooperation, the Supreme Council reviewed follow-up reports and recommendations submitted by the Ministerial Council, and took the following decisions:

The Council reviewed the progress made by GCC in the economic sphere based on the reports and recommendations submitted by the relevant ministerial committees and by the Secretariat.

The Supreme Council endorsed the document on a uniform trade policy for GCC States that aims to unify the external trade policy of GCC States and to treat the outside world as a single economic unit, while adopting a uniform internal trade

policy to facilitate the movement of people, goods, services and transport, and which takes into consideration environmental and consumer protection.

It also reviewed the positive impact of the customs union in increasing commercial exchanges and the movement of goods among GCC States. It approved an extension of the custom union's transitional period through the end of 2007, and agreed to exempt a number of commodities from customs duties.

The Council reviewed the progress made by member States in 2005 in implementing the plan for a GCC common market, particularly in the area of the buying and trading of shares. The Council endorsed the agreement by the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee, acting on its authority, to extend the scope of economic activities open to GCC nationals to include ownership of employment agencies, car rentals and most cultural activities.

The Council instructed the relevant committees to complete all the necessary formalities for the Gulf Common Market to be established by the end of 2007.

With regard to the timetable for the establishment of the GCC Monetary Union, the Supreme Council reviewed the Secretariat's report on steps taken in this area and approved the financial and monetary criteria for economic convergence agreed on by the Committee on Financial and Economic Cooperation and the Committee of Governors of Monetary Agencies and Central Banks. It instructed the two Committees to undertake a study of how these criteria and their percentages were arrived at and submit it to the next session of the Supreme Council.

The Council reviewed a number of other economic reports submitted by the Secretariat and issued instructions regarding them. They included reports on the interconnection of water systems among GCC States, the economic feasibility of a railway network connecting GCC countries, and the status of implementation of the "smart card" project in each of the GCC States.

The Supreme Council reviewed reports on standard precautionary measures taken by GCC countries to counter the threat of avian influenza and on the results of the joint emergency meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture and Health of GCC States on this subject. It issued instructions to the relevant ministerial committees to intensify and coordinate efforts to prevent the transmission and spread of this disease.

The Council also reviewed the report of the Secretary-General on measures taken to strengthen cooperation between GCC countries and the Republic of Yemen in this regard. These measures included earlier directives by the Supreme Council to contribute to funding for development projects in Yemen and to organize a conference to explore investment opportunities in the Republic of Yemen.

The Supreme Council reviewed developments in the economic relations between GCC States and other States and international groups during 2005, including framework agreements on economic cooperation and on free trade negotiations between GCC and the European Union. It welcomed the progress made during the latest round of negotiations between the two parties and expressed the hope that the negotiations would culminate in the signing of a free trade agreement in the near future. The Council also expressed its satisfaction with the progress in negotiations for the establishment of free trade zones between GCC and the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Turkey.

The Supreme Council discussed a number of human, health and environmental issues. Given the desire of the GCC States to protect the health of humans and their environment from the dangers of exposure to ultraviolet radiation as a result of the depletion of the ozone layer, and consistent with international efforts within the framework of the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, the Supreme Council approved uniform GCC guidelines for the control of substances that deplete the ozone layer.

The Supreme Council reviewed the Secretary-General's special report on education and referred it to the Ministerial Council for implementation of its proposals. The Council also commended the efforts being made by the Ministers of Education to implement its decisions and directed the Committee of Ministers of Higher Education to expedite the implementation of joint programmes and projects in higher education, including those contained in the document on comprehensive development of the education sector, taking into account the opinions and observations of the GCC States.

With regard to the efforts being made to provide social insurance for public and private-sector workers who are nationals of GCC countries, the Supreme Council expressed its satisfaction with the preparatory measures taken by member States, task forces and the relevant ministerial committees to implement the decision taken at its twenty-fifth session, held in Manama in December 2004, regarding the extension of the insurance scheme to nationals of GCC States employed in GCC States other than their own.

The Supreme Council expressed its satisfaction with the steps being taken by member States to improve the situation of families and children and with the efforts being made to increase the participation of women in development efforts.

In the area of youth and sports, the Supreme Council praised the efforts being made by the Ministers of Youth and Sports, the Chairmen of Olympic Committees, and the technical committees to raise the level of sports in GCC countries and to promote youth and sports activities.

With regard to cooperation in the legal field, the Supreme Council approved the revised version of the Riyadh document on a uniform code of criminal procedure to serve as a guideline for GCC States for the next four years. The Council also extended the validity of the Kuwait document on a uniform civil code for GCC States, the Doha document on a uniform penal code, the Abu Dhabi document on a uniform juvenile code, the Manama document on a uniform code of legal representation, and the Muscat document on a uniform code of evidence to serve as guidelines for the next four years. It also extended the validity of the Manama document on a uniform code of civil appeals procedure to serve as a guideline pending its revision and adoption in final form.

In the military sphere, the Supreme Council reviewed the results of the fourth meeting of the Joint Defence Council, held in the Kingdom of Bahrain on 22 Sha'ban AH 1426, corresponding to 26 September 2005. It ratified the resolutions of the Joint Defence Council and hailed the progress achieved in this area.

(The Council also reviewed the letter from the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, regarding the development of the

Al-Jazeera (Peninsula) Shield force. The Council endorsed the King's proposals and referred them to the Joint Defence Council for further study and for recommendations to be submitted to the next session of the Supreme Council.)

In the area of security coordination and cooperation, the Supreme Council reviewed the results and decisions of the 24th meeting of Ministers of the Interior, held in Manama in November 2005. The Council expressed satisfaction with coordination and security cooperation among member States and with the positive steps taken in this area to protect GCC States from dangerous security threats, such as the spread of drugs, money-laundering, and the smuggling of arms and explosives, as well as with the development of techniques to combat infiltration and of secure means of communication and information exchange among the various security agencies of member States.

The Supreme Council endorsed the agreement reached by the Ministers of the Interior on the transportation of persons convicted of crimes punishable by deprivation of liberty between member States and authorized them to sign it, owing to the significance of its humanitarian aspects.

In view of the rapid developments in the world today in the field of security as a result of terrorist acts, the Supreme Council reviewed the efforts and mechanisms of GCC States to combat terrorism at the regional and international levels, and expressed its satisfaction with them. It reaffirmed the firm position of GCC States on combating and rejecting terrorism in all its forms, from whatever source, and on whatever specious pretexts. The Supreme Council reiterated its appeals and support for all regional and international efforts to combat terrorism through the clarification and coordination of positions on a definition of terrorism, distinguishing it from the legitimate right of peoples to oppose occupation without the spilling of innocent blood.

In this context, the Supreme Council welcomed the outcome of the International Counter-Terrorism Conference hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Riyadh in February 2005 and the recommendations it made, in particular the proposal by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud, for the establishment of an international counter-terrorism centre, which would doubtless make a vital and active contribution to international counter-terrorism efforts. The Council therefore supports the establishment of a task force under United Nations auspices to study the recommendations concerning the proposed centre.

The Council also reiterated its condemnation of terrorist acts and the resulting death of innocent people and destruction of property. It stressed the importance of confronting these terrorist acts collectively and internationally.

Regarding the work of its Advisory Board, the Supreme Council reviewed and approved the Board's views on terrorism and referred them to the relevant ministerial committees for the establishment of the necessary implementing mechanisms. Regarding the Board's evaluation of the work of GCC over the past 23 years, the Supreme Council, desiring to benefit from them in a way that serves the purposes of joint cooperation, agreed to refer the Board's views to the member States for review and comments by the appropriate parties, after which the Board would be charged with finalizing their views for submission to the Supreme Council at its next session.

The Supreme Council also charged the Advisory Board with examining two subjects during its upcoming session: economic citizenship and its role in deepening Gulf citizenship, and the significance of economic partnerships in supporting the relationships between GCC States and their neighbours.

In the political sphere, the Supreme Council discussed a number of regional, Arab and international issues and articulated the positions of the GCC States on them, including the following:

- Regarding the continued occupation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of the three islands, the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, belonging to the United Arab Emirates, the Supreme Council reaffirmed its staunch and established position enunciated in numerous previous declarations that it supports the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates over its three islands, the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, and over the territorial waters, airspace, continental shelf and exclusive economic zone of those islands, which constitute an integral part of the United Arab Emirates.

- The Supreme Council expressed its regret over the failure to date of contacts with the Islamic Republic of Iran to achieve any progress that would make an effective contribution to resolving this issue, and thus to security and stability in the region.

- The Supreme Council affirmed that it continues to consider all peaceful means towards the restoration of the right of the United Arab Emirates over its three islands, and that the Islamic Republic of Iran should respond to the efforts of the United Arab Emirates and the international community to resolve the issue through direct negotiations or recourse to the International Court of Justice.

With regard to Iraq, the Council welcomed the Iraqi parliamentary elections that took place on 15 December, in which all of the brotherly Iraqi people of all sects and ethnic affiliations participated. The Supreme Council hopes that the election results will open a new page in the history of modern Iraq that will lead to that country's unity, stability, administration of its own affairs, and return to being an effective member of the Arab and world communities living in peace with its neighbours. The Council urged the Iraqi people to continue their dialogue with a view to achieving a comprehensive national reconciliation that will serve as the primary guarantee of Iraqi unity, stability and sovereignty. The Supreme Council affirmed the continued commitment of GCC States to the pledges they have made regarding Iraqi reconstruction.

In keeping with the desire of the leaders of GCC States to see the aspirations of the brotherly Iraqi people for security and stability realized, the Council condemned bombings and terrorist acts targeting civilians, humanitarian and religious institutions and Iraqi infrastructure.

The Council also condemned the deliberate mass killing of Iraqis, Kuwaiti prisoners and detainees, and nationals of other States committed by the former Iraqi regime as well as the flagrant violations of human rights, Islamic and other fundamental moral principles and Arab values that continue to come to light as mass graves are uncovered.

The Council welcomed the ongoing cooperation between the State of Kuwait and the Republic of Iraq to relieve the suffering undergone by the two countries as a

result of the inhumane practices of the former Iraqi regime, and to resolve outstanding issues such as the return of Kuwaiti property and the Kuwaiti national archives seized by the former Iraqi regime during its occupation of Kuwait and the determination of the fate of Kuwaiti prisoners and nationals of other States.

The Supreme Council reviewed developments on the Palestinian front and in the Middle East peace process and expressed the hope that the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and some settlements in the West Bank, while a step in the right direction, would be followed by steps towards a total withdrawal from all occupied Palestinian lands so as to enable the brotherly Palestinian people to build their independent State on their national soil with Jerusalem as its capital.

In this regard, the Supreme Council reaffirmed the commitment of GCC States to the Arab peace initiative declared by the 2002 Beirut Summit based on internationally recognized resolutions, and stressed the compatibility of that initiative with the road map.

The Council also reaffirmed that a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East would be achieved only through the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, supported by the necessary components, with Jerusalem as its capital. The Council also stressed the need for an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Arab Golan to the line of 4 June 1967 and from the Shaba farmlands in southern Lebanon.

The Supreme Council demanded that Israel desist from its arbitrary practices against defenceless Palestinians, including ending targeted assassinations, stopping settlement activity and evacuating settlements, ceasing construction of the separation wall and removing the sections that have already been built, and preventing threats issued by extremist Jewish groups calling for the storming of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The Council stressed that such threats could only inflame Muslim sensibilities, as they related to violations of their holy places, which would destroy the peace process.

The Council demanded that Israel accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and subject all of its nuclear facilities to the international inspections regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and asked the international community to apply pressure on Israel to do so.

The Supreme Council renewed its demand to make the Middle East, including the Gulf region, into a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

The Supreme Council reviewed recent developments in Lebanon and expressed its condemnation of the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in an act of criminal aggression directed against him and his comrades after a life of dedicated service to the security, stability and development of Lebanon. It also condemned the repeated assassination of leaders and symbols of the Lebanese people, stressing the desire of GCC States to support political, security and economic stability for the Lebanese people. The Council called on its brothers in Lebanon to work to mend the rift between them, to preserve the unity and cohesion of Lebanon, and to provide security, stability and well-being for its brotherly people. The Council condemned repeated Israeli threats, violations and attacks on Lebanese sovereignty and independence.